

*The ANSWER of JOHN LOFTING of London,  
Merchant, to a Paper published by George Oldner, inti-  
tuled, An Essay towards the preventing the Proceedings  
of Fire in the City and Suburbs of London, &c.  
Humbly presented to the Right Honourable Sir WILLIAM  
ASHHURST, Kt. Lord Mayor of the City of London,  
and to the Worshipful the Aldermen of the said City.*

**T**HE said *Oldner* having (as appears by the said Paper) laid his Proposals be-  
fore the Worshipful Sir *Thomas Abney* and Sir *William Hedges*, Aldermen and  
Sheriffs of this Honourable City; and made a Trial (as the said *Oldner* sets  
forth) before his Lordship, and the said Sheriffs, with good Approbation:  
It may seem (at the first sight) a very high Presumption in the said *Lofting*,  
to censure any thing which hath been honoured by the Approval of such Judicious and Dis-  
cerning Persons. But the said *Lofting* hopes, if he shall propose better Methods than this  
pretending Contriver; and if it shall appear, that whatsoever merited the Approbation of  
his Lordship, and Sheriffs, was owing to the said *Lofting*; and that all Mr. *Oldner's* Contri-  
vance is worth nothing: The said *Lofting* is well assured, that this Honourable Court will  
not only do him Justice, but give him such Encouragement as he may hope to meet with as a  
Reward for his great Pains, Charge and Industry.

To begin therefore with this Contriver's Paper: having proposed to keep the Cisterns full  
of Water at the several Water-houses; he proposes that the said Water-Works publish in  
print where their Pipes and Trees lie; in what Streets, Lanes; on which Side the Way; at  
what Distance from the Houses; what the Diameter of the Bore is; where the Turn-cock  
lives, &c. that People may be at a certainty in breaking up the Ground. Then follows his  
Pickaxes, Spades and Shovels to break up the Pavements, and clear away the Earth to come  
to the Pipe or Tree. After that comes his Mallets, Augurs, Wooden-plugs; and a Brass  
hollow Ferrel joined to a Leather Hose, must be prepared for each Engine, to convey the  
Water clean into the Engine, that the Engine may not be choaked or broken by foul Water.  
Now had Mr. *Oldner* the least Contrivance worth publishing in print, he would rather have  
advised to Fire-Cocks in all convenient Places upon the *Maines* of the several Water-Works,  
capable to discharge all the Water conveyed by those Main Pipes; and the Pickaxes and all  
the numerous Tools he mentions would have been insignificant, and a Turn of a Hand  
would have done more than all his digging up the Streets, breaking the Pipes, or the Water-  
Works publishing in print all those Impertinencies he mentions. As to the Brass hollow  
Ferrel joined to the leather Hose, (which is part of the said *Lofting's* Invention, for which  
he hath their Majesties Patent) the said *Oldner's* Application is as ridiculous as the rest of his  
Contrivances: for if one of these must be to every Engine, then it is plain, so many Engines  
as are at Work, so many Hoses must be cut in the Pipes, if not so many Places broke up in  
the Street; for which Contrivance the Owners of the Water-Works will have little cause to  
return him Thanks. Whereas the said *Lofting* will work his Engines with Kennel-Water, be-  
it never so foul, or as it comes from the Fire-Cocks, without breaking up the Pavements, or  
mangling the Pipes: and as the dirtier the Water is, the more effectual it is to quench a  
Fire, so there is no danger of breaking or disordering the said *Lofting's* Engines with dirty  
Water. But this Contriver once seeing the said *Lofting* make trial of the said way, which  
the said *Lofting* hath since rejected as not convenient nor proper, he has assumed it as his  
own Invention.

But suppose (when the Pickaxes, Spades and Shovels have done their Parts) the Water  
in the upper Cisterns of the Water-Works should be spent, so as to want Force to rise into  
the Engines through the said leather Hoses, as sometimes it may happen, (if a Fire should  
be in any of the highest Parts of the City) what will this Contriver do to fill the En-  
gines, he having mentioned nothing of Buckets to supply that Defect? in such case I  
doubt he would be at a loss. Now the said *Lofting* will undertake (with God's Affi-  
stance) to quench any Fire in *Cornhil* or *Cheapside*, with Water out of the Kennels in *Thame-  
street*, without the use of Buckets, or any thing else to convey the said Water from one  
Place to the other, but with his Engines only, which I am perswaded is beyond this Contri-  
ver's reach.



The next thing proposed by this Contriver, is a long Ladder to save Persons Lives and Limbs, and to direct the Water in at the Windows. Now this being part of the said *Lofting's* Method, is assumed by this Contriver to direct the Water (conveyed through the said *Lofting's* Leather Pipes, and fastned to this Contriver's Engines) unto the Fire: And accordingly he proposes, that every Engine may be fix'd with two length of Hoses, that all their Screws may answer one another; that (if occasion be) their Pipes may be lengthned, and that the Engines may have two Forces to play without intermission. Now this Contriver might in few words have said,

My Lord, it is most certain that Mr. *Lofting's* Engines exceed all that have hitherto been known for Extinguishing Fires; and therefore be pleased to let me have the sole Direction and Ordering of the making of them.

And this Contriver hoping to engage this Honourable Court to patronize his Proceedings, concludes with offering his Opinion, and puts his Hand to it as a Point of Law, viz.

" I Cannot conceive how that Patent can prohibit the City of *London* from using either two  
 " Forces or Leather Hoses in any wife, the City having one Engine thus fixed now stand-  
 " ing in *Guild-hall* Engine-House, which was used at the great Fire in *Southmark*, which was  
 " many Years before their Patent.

GEO. OLDNER.

Sir *Francis Pemberton* could have done no more; and no doubt this Contriver thinks he deserves a good Fee for it. But that he may not continue any longer under a Mistake, the said *Lofting* thinks fit to let him know, That he having, upon another Occasion, taken Advice of an Able and Eminent Counsel, is assured, that the said Engine having not been used, but neglected, and laid aside as impracticable, it can be no Bar to his Patent, but the said Patent is valid, and he the first and true Inventor, within the Statute of *Monopolies*, 21 Jac. 1. he being the first that hath brought it to Perfection, and reduced it to publick Practice.

May it therefore please your Lordship, and this Honourable Court, The said *Lofting*, and all the Persons concerned with him in the said Patent, having the Honour to be Citizens of this most Famous and Flourishing City; and the meanest of them having as great, if not a greater Interest therein than this Contriver: It cannot be supposed their Zeal and Concern should fall short of his, not only for its Welfare and Prosperity, but for the Preservation of it; which they have sufficiently demonstrated by their readiness, upon all Occasions, to go with their Engines and Servants for the extinguishing any sudden Fires: In which (by the Blessing of God) they have succeeded to admiration, while other Engines have either been broke with working, and so rendred unserviceable, or else have not been capable of being brought near enough to quench the Fire; as appears by Certificates under the Hands of Sir *Christopher Wren*, and of several eminent Citizens of this City; for which the said *Lofting* and Company never received one Farthing Gratuity for their Pains and Expence: And therefore the said *Lofting* and Company cannot doubt but that they shall meet with all due Encouragement from this Honourable Court, who, to their Glory, have ever had the deserved Reputation of distributing Justice to all Persons without Partiality. The said *Lofting* and Company desiring nothing but the Patronage of this Honourable Court, which as Citizens they hope they may claim a Right unto. And they being most expert in making the best sort of Engines for quenching Fires; which the said *Oldner* doth himself declare, by recommending the Use of them to this Honourable Court. And the said *Lofting* and Company, having, at their great Cost and Expence, brought the same to perfection, they hope this Honourable Court will recommend their Engines to the several Wards and Parishes within this City; which the said *Lofting* and Company are ready to furnish them with on the most reasonable Terms.

Now that God will be pleased to preserve your Lordship, the Right Worshipful the Aldermen, and all the Inhabitants of this City, and Suburbs thereof, so that there may be no Occasion to make use of these, or any other Engines upon so sad and calamitous an Occasion, shall be the Prayers of, Right Honourable and Right Worshipful,

Your most humble and obedient Servant,

JOHN LOFTING.

